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Letter dated 3 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a concept note for the ministerial open debate on the theme "Maintenance of international peace and security: conflicts in Europe", to be held on 21 February 2017 (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 3 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the ministerial open debate on the theme "Maintenance of international peace and security: conflicts in Europe", to be held on 21 February 2017

Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 signalled the beginning of a new era in European security. With the end of the military and ideological stand-off that had divided the continent for almost five decades, there were high expectations that Europe would become a strategically stable continent.

Despite such expectations, new challenges and threats emerged on the European continent in the 1990s, some of which were triggered by broader geopolitical processes, while others were caused by religious, ethnic or territorial disputes. The conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and the Caucasus, as well as the Transnistrian conflict that erupted at the end of the twentieth century, had a negative impact on the European security architecture and deepened rivalries and controversies in the region.

The conflicts that have emerged in Europe in the twenty-first century, exacerbated by the dangerous developments in the countries with protracted or unresolved conflicts, have reached a tipping point and pose a critical risk to the stability of the entire region. Those conflicts now constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and should be properly addressed by the Security Council as a matter of priority.

Background and key challenges

The Security Council is currently seized of the situations in Cyprus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Ukraine. The Council also discusses the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo on a quarterly basis. The developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh region are another issue of concern that has been raised repeatedly during open debates of the Council and in the letters of relevant delegations to the Secretary-General that have been circulated as documents of the Council. Conflicts in Europe feature prominently in the annual briefings of the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Despite the attention given to such conflicts by the Security Council, the great majority of existing mechanisms for their settlement are not yielding the expected results, and the relevant Council resolutions on the subject are not being implemented in full.

As a result, the ongoing and protracted conflicts in Europe could lead to the further deterioration of the security situation and constitute a threat to regional and

global stability. They have called into question the security architecture in Europe and exacerbated other security issues related to the economic, energy and human dimensions.

Objectives and questions

The aim of the open debate is to assess existing threats to regional and international peace and security caused by conflicts in Europe and to review ways to respond to the continuous instability on the continent and the dangerous developments in the countries with post-conflict situations or protracted conflicts.

The participants in the open debate are invited to address the following questions:

- What is the role of the Security Council and the Secretary-General in addressing protracted, new and emerging conflicts in Europe, especially those that do not fit into traditional security paradigms?
- What are the lessons learned from and the best practices and examples of cooperation among the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union in conflict resolution in Europe, and how can such cooperation be made more effective?
- How should the Security Council address situations in which parties to the conflict do not have the political will to fulfil their obligations under existing agreements and resolutions?
- What tools and options are available to the Security Council and the Secretary-General for developing confidence-building and other measures aimed at preventing the escalation of conflicts in Europe?
- Can some of the practices and experience of and the relevant lessons learned from the cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in conflict resolution in Africa and the best conflict resolution practices in other regions be of value in resolving protracted and active conflicts in Europe?

Time and venue

The open debate will take place on 21 February 2017 at 10 a.m. in the Security Council Chamber.

The format of the open debate will follow the established practice of the Security Council with regard to ministerial-level meetings.

In accordance with rules 37 and 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, it is expected that concerned Member States and relevant international, regional and subregional organizations and initiatives will participate in the open debate.